

# Informed Patients: Perspectives from Research on the Physician-Patient Relationship

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# Health Care Environment

Managed Care Rules and Regulations

Access to medical information

For-profit health care

Patient

Physician

**Trust  
Expectations**

**Encounter**  
Communication  
Informed decisions

**Outcomes**

Trust  
Satisfaction  
Adherence  
Biologic  
Malpractice  
Disenrollment

Direct to patient advertising

Legal climate

Consumerism

# Outcomes Of Communication

- ? Trust
- ? Satisfaction
- ? Adherence
- ? Biologic
- ? Malpractice
- ? Disenrollment

# Implications

- ? Policy decisions have an impact on the environment, in turn affecting the actual interaction between doctors and patients.
- ? True informed decisions depend on the quality of communication between the doctor and patient.

# Patient Centered Care (IOM)

“Healthcare that ensures that decisions respect patients’ needs and preferences and solicits patients’ input on the support they need to make decisions.”

# Informed Decision-Making Criteria

1. Discussion of the patient's role in decision-making
2. Discussion of the clinical issue or nature of the discussion
3. Discussion of the alternatives
4. Discussion of the pros and cons of the alternatives

# Informed Decision-Making Criteria

5. Assessment of the patient's understanding
6. Discussion of uncertainties associated with the decision
7. Exploration of patient preference

## Rates of Performance of Informed Decision-Making Elements

| <b>Element</b>        | <b>Percentage<br/>(n=217)</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Patient role          | 18                            |
| Nature of decision    | 84                            |
| Alternatives          | 30                            |
| Pros and cons         | 26                            |
| Uncertainties         | 17                            |
| Patient understanding | 7                             |
| Patient preferences   | 27                            |

# Implications

- ? Informed decision-making conversations fall below ethical and legal standards
- ? Malpractice implications
- ? Training of physicians
- ? Time during the visit

# Financial Incentives and Conflicts of Interest in the Doctor-Patient Relationship

- ? State and Federal regulations require disclosure of physician financial incentives
- ? Managed care has heightened patients' concerns
- ? Some patients raise this issue directly with physicians

# Research Question

1. What are patient preferences for disclosure of physician financial incentives?
2. Can disclosure occur without diminishing patient trust?

# Methods

- ? General Social Survey 2002
- ? 3000 participants
- ? “Some doctors or groups may be paid more if they limit the use of expensive tests or the use of specialists. Such arrangements are known as financial incentives.”
- ? Audiotapes of a variety of different communications strategies

# Methods: Outcomes

- ? Satisfaction with the visit
- ? Trust the physician to put your interest above costs
- ? Agree with doctor's decision
- ? Plan to switch doctors or health plans

# Results

- ? 50 % of public have heard of financial incentives
- ? Blacks, Hispanics and less educated less likely to know about them
- ? 95% want to be told
- ? prefer information to be provided by health plan representative at time of enrolment **and** by doctor

## **Common enemy**

It used to be that physicians were able to provide tests for patients just to set their minds at rest. Unfortunately, your health plan won't allow me to do it for that reason. Even though I'd like to order it for you, your plan is not going to pay for it.

## Dealing with Emotions

I can understand that you're worried about whether everything is OK. It also sounds like you're worried that I'm not ordering the test because it's too expensive. These days with Managed Care lots of people share your worries about this. I want to set your mind at rest because I truly do not think that the test is needed at this point.

# Results

|                     | Common Enemy | Emotion |
|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| Agree with Decision | 38%          | 54%     |
| Trust               | 27%          | 40%     |
| Switch doctors      | 60%          | 45%     |

# Implications

- ? Federal and State requirements for disclosure
- ? Health Plans and doctors need to disclose
- ? Some ways to disclose will decrease trust

# Overall

- ? Patients are truly informed by health professionals through effective communication
- ? Policy decisions directly and indirectly affect the interaction between physicians and patients
- ? Disclosure of financial incentives may affect the outcomes of care